Vol. I. SHANGHAI, 24th DECEMBER 1912. No. 8.

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QUACK!

QUACK!

QUACK!

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QUACK

CHRISTMAS 1912: IN ERRANT METRE.

The snap's gone out of Christmas-day, the bloom is off the plum;
We find we wish that Christmas-day would go before it's come;
Yet those who crab at Christmas-day had better far be dumb.

Now Lamas-day and Michaelmas have both gone by the board;
Now all the woes of Good King Charles are not told to the Lord;
And even the reason of Gunpowder Treason is lost in the garden with Maud.

The Waters of Lethe like Tansan and Rosback are drowning our spirits of yore;
With motors and air-ships we don't ride on horse-back, or gird up our loins any more;
These thoughts and reflections damp down our affections and leave us a Heap on the Floor.

* * *

Poor old Charity! you are responsible for many foolish things being done in your name—did you *really* think we were going to dress ourselves up as William and Mary, Bluff King Hal, and Catherine of Aragon?—Oh, no! Archibald, certainly not, n-n-n-NO, as Mignon used to say. A Committee of 65 is a nice handy little body of good men and true to deal with, but even Tls. 650—had they *all* subscribed—would never have been enough for a wozzle *a la* St. Andrew. Mercifully *judgement* was given against you, long suffering Charity, and it was a very cleverly worded little notice too, and seemed to echo "I told you so!"

* * *

I knew Merridew was wrong when he assured me that they had decided to hold it in the Chamber of Commerce Rooms instead of the Town Hall. I know the capacity of the Chamber of Commerce Rooms so well, and although in the cold weather, sitting familiar-like, 65 could have got in, there would never have been room for the Town Band on the green baize table, and those pillars would have interfered horribly with the dancing, especially for Hopgood's style.

Never mind, it has saved me a telegram to London.

* * *

However, it all passed off pleasantly.

* * *

We all know how long suffering is Charity, and also that it begins in the Settlement and travels as far as Woosung by the S. N. Ry. whence it takes to water, and shortly vanishes in thin air. I had a watch which cost me $10 and sold it to a friend for $20, after which I gave $5 of the proceeds of sale to the Hospital for Distressed Gentle Cats, and they promptly erected a feline tablet to my honour which cost them $4.90, and here's ten cents left for the purchase of charitable milk for poor pussy—You catch my drift?—I wish to make it quite clear what a good chap I am, so I will tell you in confidence that I usually charge $25 for a $10 watch.

* * *

For the realisation of the triumph of mind over matter no one can do better than visit the Electric Light Works; the triumph of matter over mind is in daily evidence in the columns of the *North China Daily News*.

* * *

Before those in high places are entitled to break a lance with the social evil they should be made to satisfy the examiners that they have first achieved some social good.

* * *

No spectacle is more distressing than that of a man making use of the confidences of a quondam friendship to feed the flame of new hatched hostility. So we feel when the affectionate twaddle of a love-letter is used to provoke a sympathetic titter during the course of divorce proceeding. It seems so desperately shabby, so caddish. Nevertheless, if you can only make your point by disclosing Millicent's lovey-dovey-isms, if you can only gain your end by blabbing out what Charlie said in the billiard-room after his fourth whiskey, if in fine you *must* make a beast of yourself in this way, you must also be prepared for the cold shoulder which is generally reserved for the blackguard and the cheat.

Wal Platt

Famous *raconteurs* say that all stories emanate from three original yarns, and one of these originals was the story of the end of Mary, Queen of Scots. It happened thus. At the local Penny Reading, they presented a tableau illustrating this historic event, the curate, acting as Headsman (mask and all) and the governess from the Vicarage as Queen Mary. The curtains were drawn, and a cold shiver passed down one's spine as one saw the Curate, axe poised above the lily-white neck of Miss Spiffkins on the block. You could have heard a pin drop, but all of a sudden, those of us sitting in front saw a terrible gleam appear in the eye of the executioner. To err is human, he could bear the temptation no longer, that white neck had fascinated him and—it was all over in a second. Never have I seen such an effective curtain, as Miss Spiffkin's head rolled towards the footlights.

* * *

Talking of things theatrical, when I was in London some months ago I had the pleasure of dining with Sir Herbert Rubber Tree whom I hadn't met since I came out East. He was much surprised—and sorry—to hear that I had pitched my camp so far from the world dramatic (he had mentally pigeon-holed me for such parts as Lancelot Gobbo, etc.,—at least he said so) and after dinner we had the opportunity of a quiet talk. Naturally I mentioned our local A.D.C. to him, and hoping to make him laugh spoke of old . . . . . (Oh—Hush!). Never shall I forget the wonderful change that came over his supple and dramatic countenance at that magic name—he looked twenty years younger—and then began to recall the years as far back as 1870, at which time he told me that he and old . . . . . (Oh shut up!) were knockabout artists together. Apparently about 1871 old . . . . . left for the East, and the broken-hearted knight gave up knocking anyone else about and became a tragedian, and has stuck to it ever since as an appropriate token of esteem and regard for his lost colleague and friend.

Of course we all know how difficult it is to play the conscious fool, cold sober, but it seems carrying things a bit too far, even when you are going to act a burlesque, for one of the stars to inform a lady before the rise of the curtain that all his Cast are *tight*, and that he himself is positively *drunk*. This being the case, the public's reception of "Spotted Mignonette" was both warm and kind, though a male and female globe-trotter from Boston, Mass., who were sitting in front of me remarked that the Chinese looked *bum* in European clothes, though sometimes the things they said appeared to be in the American language. I only hope that they were not referring to the word used by our legal luminary to Villiam in the first verse of his second song! Truly, John, I could hardly believe my ears, and they say I blushed through my carmine nose.

THE COLD SHOULDER

VODKA

A GHOST STORY

CHAPTER VI.

". . . When Cissy came leaping along they felt they simply could not stand any more."

The End

LOLLIPOPLAND

BY DOROTHY

ING HARDBAKE was talking very seriously to his daughter Nougatine on the subject of her marriage.

"My dear!" he said, "you really must listen to reason. I have chosen two very nice young princes for you, and one or the other you must have."

"But I don't want to marry a strange prince I have never seen," cried Nougatine.

"Fiddlesticks!" said the king, "they are coming to see you this morning, and then you will have to make your choice. One or the other, my dear, one or the other!"

Nougatine looked very sad. She didn't want to marry yet, and when she did it would be much nicer to suddenly fall in love with someone, than to have a couple of suitors sent up to choose from as if she was the cook buying a fowl.

"What are their names, your majesty?" she asked. "They are Prince Flop and Prince Blob." replied the king. "Flop and Blob! What curious names. I hope they don't suit them, I'm sure, I shouldn't like a floppy or a blobby husband.

"My dear Nougatine! they are most gallant young princes and they've got a goldmine apiece. I don't mind which you choose, but it's got to be one or the other—remember—one or the other!"

"But suppose I don't like them!" said Nougatine with tears in her pretty eyes.

"Fiddlesticks! you've got to like them—you must like them—of course you'll like them—one or the other. Now I'm going to see if they've arrived, and when they do I'll send them to talk to you. Mind you're very polite, and if you don't take Flop you must have Blob—one or the other!" And off he bustled leaving Nougatine to think over his words. She had had many suitors but none so far that the king thought rich enough. Nougatine was very pretty, she had the goldenest hair that ever grew, and eyes like the sea, sometimes blue and sometimes green.

"ONE OR THE OTHER, MY DEAR"

PRINCE FLOP

Soon after the king had left her, she heard someone coming up to the door, and then she heard a sort of frightened cough, and then the door handle rattled a little, then a pale face peered in at her and then disappeared. At last this timid visitor gathered courage to enter the room.

Nougatine knew at once that this was Prince Flop.

"Oh! his name does suit him!" she said to herself with a sigh. Flop was a little feeble looking slip of a man, who always looked as if he had just been drenched in water, and he came up on tip-toe, with bent knees and hanging head as if he was ashamed even to exist.

Nougatine waited for him to speak, hoping he would be too frightened and would run away. Flop cleared his throat fourteen times and looked at her with his pale, sloppy, floppy eyes.

"Your royal highness," he began at last, "I've come a long way—I should think it very kind—I mean, I hope you won't think me very bold—but, in short—will you—Oh! It's very hot to-day, ain't it?"

Nougatine couldn't help laughing. "It is rather warm," she agreed, "would you like something cool to drink?"

"No, thank you," said Flop, "I'm trying to say—I mean I'm hoping to hope—that is, I'm going to go and ask you if—in short whether you mind me being here?"

"Oh! no," Nougatine answered politely, "but I think I'd better leave you to rest, you seem rather tired."

"Oh! no," he cried, "it's not that, it's my feelings! My feelings are such that I can only say—Oh! Princess Nougatine, will you—can you—I mean, of course you can if you like,—but could you—would you—er—Oh!—WON'T YOU HELP ME OUT?

"Help you out?" she cried, moving towards the door, "I fear I am not strong enough. Are you feeling faint? I will call one of the men."

Poor Flop groaned in despair, and waved his hand feebly to indicate he wanted her to come back.

"I don't want to go away," he whimpered, "I want you to marry me."

"Oh!" said Nougatine, apparently greatly surprised. "Then I am sorry to say I must decline your proposal, feeling at the same time deeply grateful for the honour."

Flop stood quite still for a minute, his eyes and mouth both opened as wide as they would go and his toes turned in. "He does look a silly," thought Nougatine to herself, "I wouldn't marry him if he had a hundred gold mines."

"You won't marry me?" he said at last in a shrill voice.

"No, I'm afraid I can't," said the princess.

At this Flop began dashing about the room with surprising energy and finally threw himself on to a gilt and rose-coloured sofa, where he lay, pressing a rose-coloured cushion over his face and kicking wildly at the air. Disappointment affects different people in different ways. This was Flop's.

"Oh, dear! Oh, dear! Oh, dear!" his voice came muffled from under the cushion, "what shall I do? Oh, dear!"

"I should go home again if I were you," said the princess.

"I don't want to go home!" cried Flop, throwing the cushion to the farthest corner of the room, but kicking harder than ever. "I don't want to go home! I want to marry you!"

"Well, you can't, so get up and don't behave in that ridiculous manner," said Nougatine severely. "Do you know, Prince Blob is coming to see me presently, so I really think you'd better go. I believe he wants to marry me too."

Flop rolled off the sofa and then picked himself up, looking more deplorable than ever.

"I know!" he said in a hollow voice, "that's the worst of it all. He's my hated rival and he's so much bigger than me. Oh, dear! Oh, dear! What shall I do?"

SCURRIED OFF ACROSS THE GARDEN

At this moment the door opened and Prince Blob appeared.

In a flash Flop ran to the window, jumped out and scurried off across the garden, never stopping till he was out of sight.

PRINCE BLOB

"HO! HO!" roared Blob, "he's afraid of me! Ho! ho! he's a poor creature, is Flop. Now, don't you go taking up with Flop, there's better men than Flop to be had."

The princess eyed him silently. He was not much more attractive than Flop. He was very stout, in fact he was almost circular, more like a big ball than a man. He had a fat, red face, a nose that pointed straight up at the sky, and eyes that bulged.

He had none of the diffidence of Flop. He grinned broadly at Nougatine, and went right up to her, still grinning and rolling his eyes. "What do you want?" she said indignantly, "how dare you talk to me like that!"

"I aren't talking, Nougat," he answered, "but I'm going to. Your royal pa said I might. He's very fond of me, is your royal pa. I believe it's all along of my goldmine, but never mind, I don't care, so long as you marry me, Nougat!"

"I won't marry you and how dare you call me Nougat! I hate you!—you're worse than Flop, and that's saying a very great deal indeed," cried the princess, crimson with indignation. Blob grinned more broadly than ever, and chuckled. He stood and chuckled for some time, but when the princess attempted to leave the room, he stood in front of the door and, pointing a fat finger at her, He said, "You've got to do what you royal pa tells you, so there! You've got to marry me or Flop, I know that! and Flop's gone, so there's only me. See?"—and he chuckled again.

"Open that door immediately, and don't dare to treat me in this impudent fashion again," said the princess very haughtily, drawing herself up, and trying to look like a princess with a great deal of authority.

"Say you'll marry me, immediately!" said Blob, throwing his head back, and trying to imitate the princess, "and don't dare to treat me in this lie-down-you're-dirt-beneath-my-feet-don't-know-you kind of fashion."

The princess stamped her foot.

"I'm not going to stay here and listen to you any longer. If you won't let me out of the door I shall jump out of the window, like Flop, and I shall probably hurt myself, and it will be your fault, and the king will put you into a dungeon, or perhaps hang you—and I shall be very glad!" "Would you mind repeating that again? I didn't quite catch the drift of it," remarked Blob.

The princess tried to wither him with a glance, but he wouldn't be withered. Perhaps he was too fat.

He just stood with his back to the door, and whistled a tune, grinning all the time. It isn't everyone who can whistle and grin at the same time, but Blob could.

Nougatine turned away and sat down near the window, and pretended not to notice he was there.

Blob came and stood opposite her, and was just beginning to chuckle, when the door opened and King Hardbake came in. "Well, my dear!" he said with a smile, for he thought from Blob's face he must have been successful. "Well, my dear Nougatine,"—then as she said nothing, "well, my dear?" "Well, sire?" replied Nougatine. "Ho! ho! ho!" roared Blob, "we're all right, your majesty, aren't we, Nougat, we've been making friends!" "No, we havn't!" cried the princess springing to her feet. "Father! do take away that horrid, great, Fat, DREADFUL, man!

"My dear! My dear!" said the king much shocked," pray do not speak like that. You must excuse her, your royal highness, it's the excitement! She is very young, and this unexpected honour——" "It's not unexpected, and it's not an honour!" cried Nougatine, "he's been very rude to me so now I shall be rude to him, and I would as soon marry a great plum-pudding as THAT!"

The king was struck dumb with horror, Blob did nothing but laugh—Nougatine was in tears.

"Leave the room, Nougatine," said the king angrily, "I will try to apologise for you to this noble prince."

"LEAVE THE ROOM"

The noble prince was lolling back in a comfortable chair with one leg cocked over the other, sucking some sweets which he took out of a paper bag in his pocket. "Here, princess, have one to show there's no ill feeling!" he shouted, throwing a sweet at her as she turned to leave the room, "they're out of your royal pa's own hardbake mines, and jolly good too. Ho! ho!"

She swept out of the room without answering him, and left her father to entertain this rather difficult guest.

"I really do not know," began the king, "how to express my sorrow at my daughter's rudeness. Believe me, I would have given anything to prevent this display of temper on her part. I fear she is a spoilt child, her manners are far from good. Perhaps her finishing governess was not all that could be desired. I remember she was not quite satisfactory—she turned into a hedgehog, in a way that was never explained. However, I will speak to Nougatine, and then I am sure she will be ready to apologise, prince, and I hope you will pardon her childish impertinence. She is really a dear girl at heart."

"Oh! She's all right!" said Blob, grinning from ear to ear, "we hit it off very nicely, thank you. I don't mind her little ways, she don't mean nothing by them."

"I am deeply grateful for the very handsome way in which you overlook her rudeness," answered the king with a low bow. Then he took Blob to the Royal Refectory where there were heaps of sweets, buckets of nougat, and mountains of almond-hardbake. The prince's eyes glistened with joy. He spent hours there, eating everything he could lay hands on—Blob had a very sweet tooth.

Meanwhile, Nougatine had escaped out into the garden; she ran as fast as she could till she reached a little wood, where she threw herself down under a tree. Then she began to cry, and she cried so much her tears made a little lake and the birds of the wood came and drank out of it, but finding the water salt they squeaked with indignation, and flew away. So she was all alone, and very unhappy because she was afraid of being made to marry Blob.

Suddenly she heard some very pretty music, it was someone playing on a pipe. She looked all round but could see no one. Presently a lot of little lambs came running by, they were pure white, and each had a

little wreath of pink may round its neck. saw a shepherd boy coming up one of the woodland glades. He was tall and fair, and very good-looking, and he wore a wreath of may too, in his hat, and some more in his dress. He took off his hat with a low bow when he saw the princess. She smiled at him and said, "Do your little lambs always wear may round their necks?"

"No, princess," he answered, "it is in honour of your visit." This pleased the princess very much, and she asked the shepherd to play again on his pipe, so he played and sang to her. Before she went home she promised to come and listen to him again the next morning.

"Good-bye, shepherd, thank you for your music," she said, "good-bye, little lambs!" and she ran off through the wood. When she got home the king sent for her, and told her she was so extraordinarily lucky as to still have a chance of becoming queen of Blobland.

"And don't let us have any more nonsense," he added severely, "you won't find a more suitable husband in a hurry. Remember the goldmine!"

Nougatine asked to be allowed a little time before she quite made up her mind, and the king said he'd give her three days. Each morning the princess met the shepherd boy who played so beautifully to her on his pipe. And the little lambs danced in time to the music.

ASKED HER IF SHE WOULD MARRY HIM

The sound of the pipe came nearer and nearer, and then Nougatine

NOUGATINE SAW A SHEPHERD BOY COMING UP ONE OF THE WOODLAND GLADES.

On the third morning the princess looked so sad that the shepherd couldn't help asking what was the matter, and Nougatine told him how she was made to marry Blob whom she hated. Then the shepherd asked her if she would marry him although he was only a simple shepherd. He told her he had come from a long way off to see her, and he fell in love with her the first moment he saw her.

Nougatine was charmed, she thought the shepherd was much nicer than any prince, and she didn't mind his being only a shepherd. "But I am afraid the king will be very angry," she said, "you see, he—wants me to marry Blob."

"I will see if I can get his consent, princess," said the shepherd, so she took him back to the palace.

When King Hardbake heard that his daughter wanted to marry a common shepherd, he became scarlet with anger and lilac with rage. "What!!!" he shouted, "MY daughter marry a swineherd"—

"Sheep, papa!" murmured Nougatine. "It's all the same!" shouted the king. "Put down that lamb," for the princess was playing with one of them. "And as for you!"—turning to the shepherd, "Why!—Who?—What!—Where!—Where on earth did YOU come from?" For lo and behold! instead of the shepherd there stood a most gorgeous prince, dressed in sparkling jewels from head to foot!

With a low bow the prince explained how it was he came to be disguised as a shepherd. He was the Prince of the Sugar Candy Islands, and he had lately inherited from a maternal aunt fourteen very good goldmines. So he made up his mind to marry, but his friends assured him that it would be all for the sake of his goldmines if anyone married him, so he was determined to show they were wrong. "In which I have been successful, for the most beautiful princess in the world consented to marry me when she thought I was a poor shepherd."

"I TOOK TO YOU FROM THE FIRST"

"FOURTEEN goldmines! did you say?" said the king.

"Yes, your majesty," replied the prince.

"I am very pleased to make your acquaintance," said the king. "I took to you from the first."

So they were married and lived happily ever afterwards.

He sets (does wicked Alister)
The heart of ev'ry gal a-stir.
His can't be reached *(it's most unfair)*
Without a ladder or a chair!

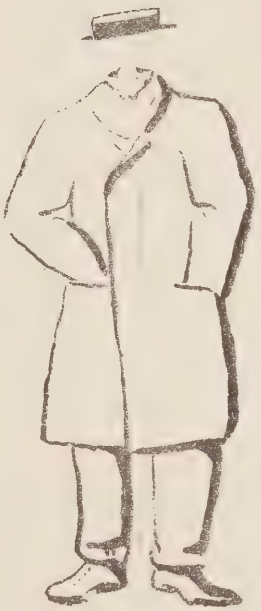
A stands for———
So knowing and wise ;
Just watch him in summer
A-catching the flies.

B stands for———
I'll bet you a tenner
You've heard him dilate
On the joys of Vienna.

C stands for———
A jock who can *not* sin ;
He is building a godown
To put all his pots in.

D for Wee———
Beloved by us all.
He is seen at his best
At the Saint Andrew's Ball.

E stands for———
A very good sort.
This rubicond rider's
A regular sport.



G stands for———
A-taking his ease
On the Grand Stand each morning ;
No liberties, please !

F stands for———
There's Frankie and Robbie ;
One works (?) and the other
Makes broking his hobby.

H stands for———
Valiant knight.
He gives all wrongdoers
A horrible fright.

I stands for————
Nobody kinder.
So gentle and lamb-like
Extracting a grinder.

J for —— ————
The hope of Ewo.
He could ride on a camel,
And coax it to go.

K stands for————
Who the dickens is he?
The partner of Arnhold,
That passes with me!

L stands for————
With prodigal hand
He scatters his dollars
All over the land.

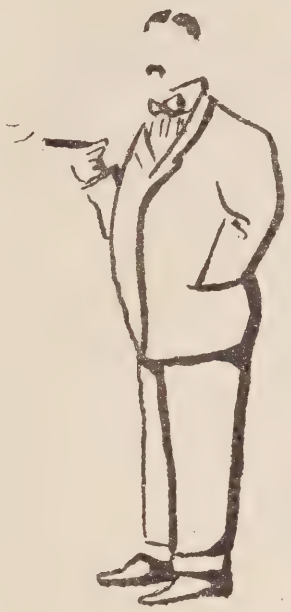
M stands for————
A warbler true
And for *Mignon*, where also
He made his début.

N stands for————
The bold Captain Kettle.
To sue him for libel
Just sharpens his mettle.

O for a dandy,
Fastidious and foppy.
A leader of fashion here
O stands for————

P stands for————
(Or Werner or Beit)
His luck's unco guid
Every Sa'urday night.

Q is a poser, but
Q stands for————
I wonder if he
Is related to Soyka?

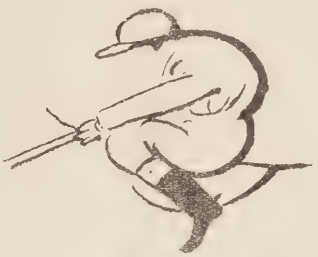


R stands for————
There's the firm and there's Hugo.
They both come from Hamburg
There most Chosen Few go.

S stands for Irving,
Or Bourchier or Tree,
Macready or Toole, in short
S stands for————

T stands for————
So fond of his rubber.
Let's hope it wont give him
Occasion to blubber.

U stands for————
A Teuton, they tell us.
There isn't a "line"
Where he don't undersell us.



V for a varlet
Who's often the leader,
And first past the post.
I am speaking of————

W for————
Whose waist is so tiny
The ladies all love you,
And you love them, Shiny!

X the unknown
Who opens the gates,
And sends the poor prisoners
Back to the States.

Y the Yahoos
Whom nobody knows
They sit in the club-room
And play dominoes.

Z for Von————
Just watch him waltz.
To cry "Flying Dutchman!"
Is certainly false.

SZE A-SUNG, A STORY OF THE CHINESE REVOLUTION

By H. H.

BOOK VII

[*This story began in "Quack,"*
June 1912, 2nd Number.]

The Monarchy's completely bust,
The cruel war is o'er,
And I, for one, sincerely trust
We shan't see any more!

You can't correctly speaking, dump
An Emperor in quod,
Like any ordinary chump,
Without appearing odd.

The wicked Emperor Ta-Ching
Was smuggled off in haste;
A most unprecedented thing
And hardly in good taste.

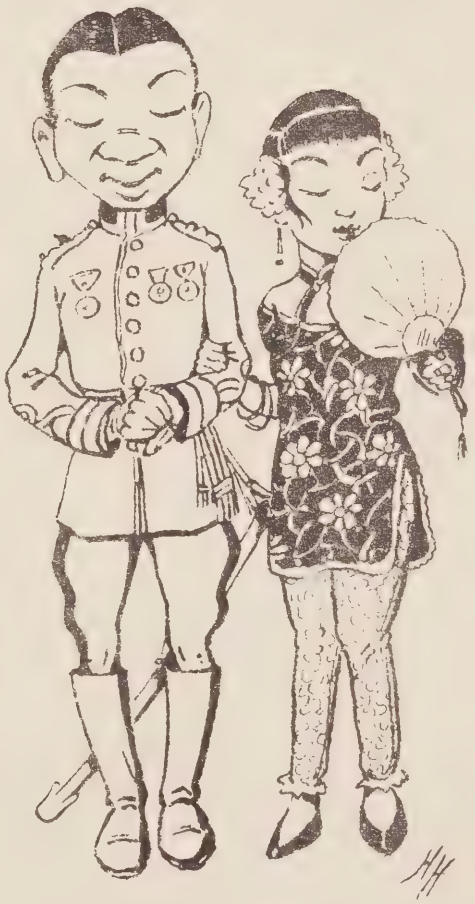
I'm told, however, that his meals
Are regular and good
And that, however mad he feels,
He don't refuse his food.

Now let us turn to brighter things
And, with complacence view
The just reward that virtue brings
To honest folk and true.

There's revelry in Nanking Road,
Old man and Mrs. Sze
Are holding feast in their abode
With samshu flowing free.

And why? Because their hearts are light
And overflow with joy.
They welcome to his home to-night
Their long lost soldier boy.

A touching sight and good to see
(I sketch them as they stand).
Our hero, the immortal Sze
And Ssuma, hand in hand.



So now, away with earthly cares
And drink a toast with me;
Rank, wealth and happiness is theirs.
"Your health, good Colonel Sze"!

Next morning, I regret to say,
An incident occurred ;
A trifle awkward, in a way,
Through really most absurd.

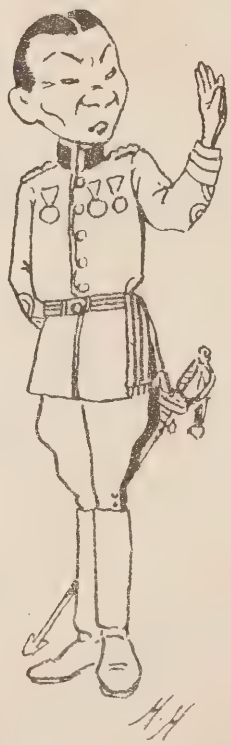
Some thirty members of the clan
Arrived at half past four
And, cheering lustily, began
To hammer at the door.

At six o'clock, by S.N.R.,
A mob, a hundred strong,
Walked boldly in ; they'd come from far
Peking and Newchwang

I'm told, and I believe it's true,
That Sze's old aunt A-Kwei
Closed up her shop at Pao Ting Foo
And legged it all the way.

They came, they said, to greet him fair,
To drink his noble health
And, incidentally, to share
His new-begotten wealth.

"Old China custom—ante up—
Look cheerful—only *pay*—
Then you can ask us in to sup,
We all have come to stay."



Alone stands Sze, surrounded by
An eager, waiting crowd,
A warlike gleam is in his eye,
His bearing calm and proud.

"Good people all, I grieve to see
You are so out of date
Your visit comes, it seems to me,
A month or so too late"

"OLD CHINA CUSTOM IS NO MORE,
Your clamour kindly cease
For, if you don't, you may be sure
I'll send for the police."

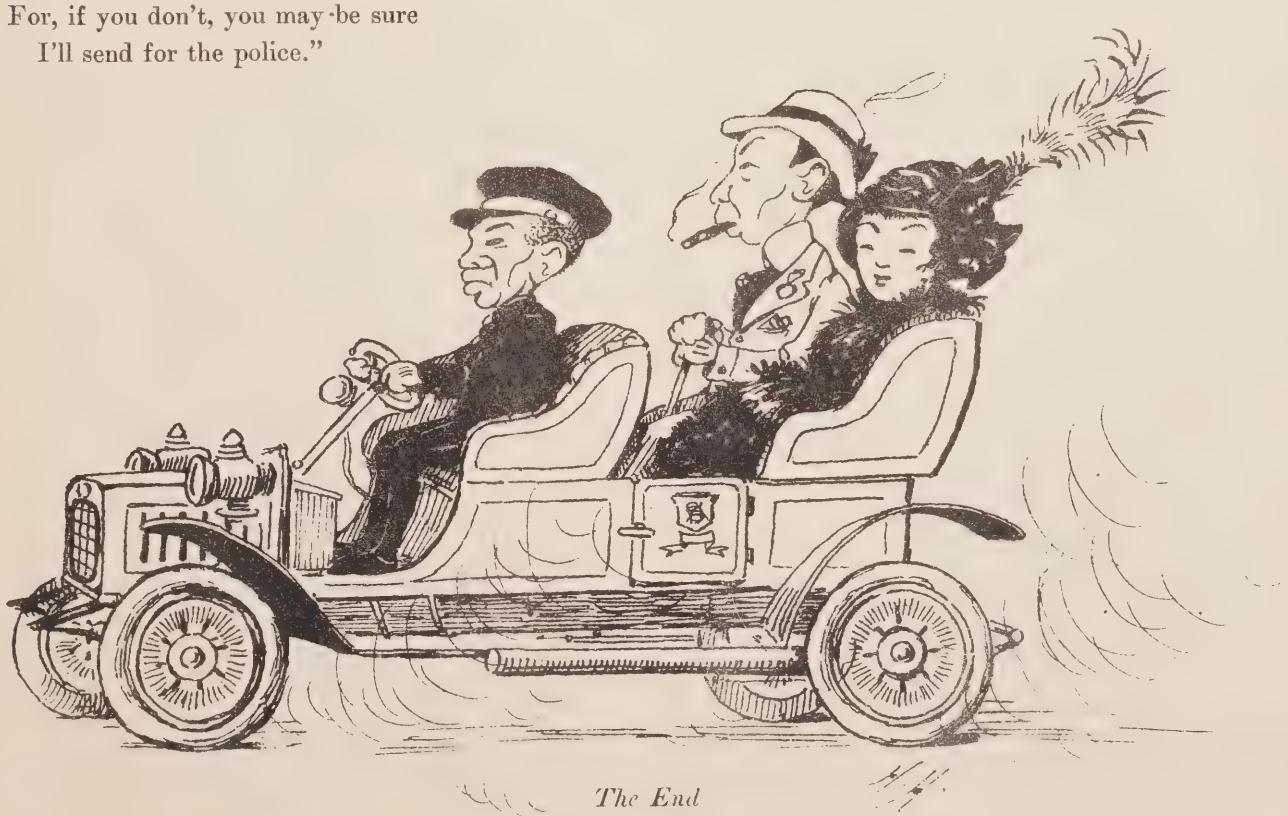
This speech gave rise, believe me, to
considerable heat
And things were said by great-aunt Wu
I really can't repeat.

But as for Sze, he went his ways
In spite of flaunts and jeers.
He'd never been, in all his days,
Susceptible to tears.

It now remains to mention that
Our Sze and Ssuma Ching
Were joined in bonds of Holy Mat-
-Rimony in the spring

They've bought a mansion that is quite
As modern as can be,
Two motor-cars, electric light
And water H and C

They're always pleased when people call
But don't, if you are wise,
Refer in any way at all
To Cooks and Puppy Pies !

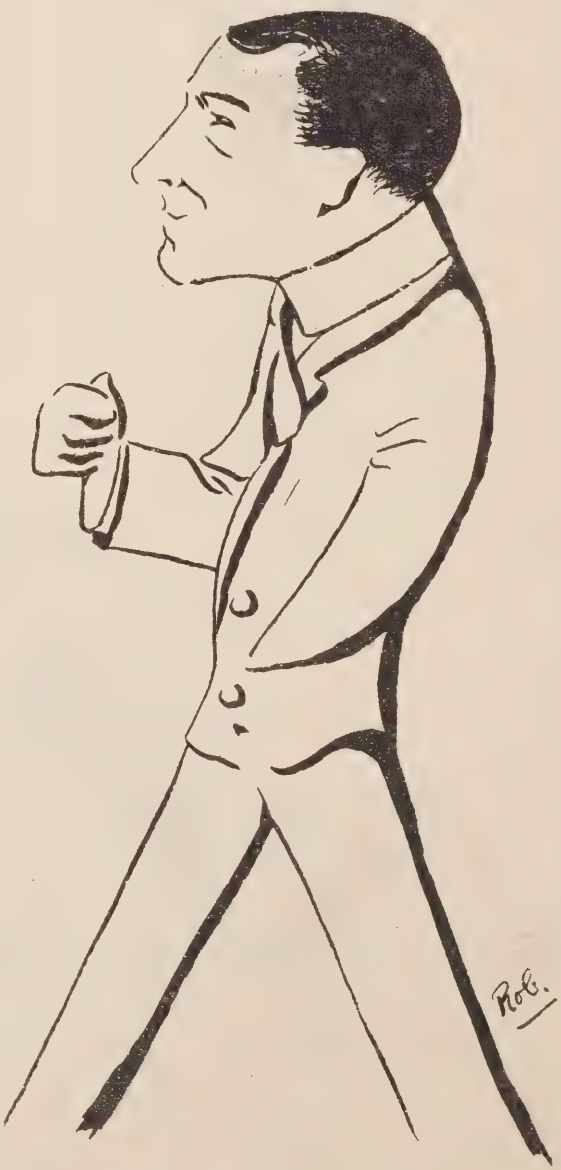


The End

MOLLUSCRY

Of course, what we want now is a good healthy failure, so that we can come down to earth with a solid bump. After *Smith* and the sickeningly successful *Mignon*, here's another show that positively has had to go in the top drawer. This in spite of the gloomy head-waggings of the wiseacres, too, who said that Shanghai doesn't like that kind of thing. Our amachoors are suffering badly from swelled head, that's what it is, and they'll die of it if we aren't careful. The highest compliment I can pay *Mrs. Baxter* is to tell her that I was dying to jump over the footlights and give her a good shaking. We are beginning to know *Tom* quite well after seeing so much of him, and can almost foretell with certainty what he will do in any given circumstances. He *has* got the gift of the gab, hasn't he? I wonder if he likes Rhodesia or Colorado best?

In *Smith*, they seemed to think that a surname was a superfluous luxury for *Algy*, and in this play poor *Miss Roberts* does not seem to have been blessed with anything in the way of a Christian one! It was most disappointing when she and *Tom* had been locked in each other's arms for thirty seconds, not to hear him quaver in a voice choked with emotion "And now tell me your name!" He



did it in precisely the same situation with the buxom parlour-maid only a month ago, so there was absolutely no excuse. My wife makes me take off my boots in the hall every night now, it was really too bad of *Mr. Baxter* to put such an idea into her head. My poor Richard, I hope you didn't really hurt yourself over that damned washstand, or any other weights you

had to move? That last squeal of yours sounded so horribly real. The critique of our leading contemporary remarked that it was most unlikely that anyone should keep a governess six feet high—no, that wasn't it, it was that she was too well-dressed for the humble part. On investigating the matter, *Miss Roberts* informed me in strict confidence that the pretty frock in the first act was given to her by a cousin of *Mrs. Baxter's* who has grown tired if it. I thought it must be something like that.

THE BASKET AND THE COFFIN

The smell of the China Coast is to be found in its most complete blend only in the China coast boat. There is garlic, and pumelo, bêche-de-mer and the Wenchow orange, and be sure too there is opium, sickly-sweet and clinging, pervading the whole. Nor is all ended with that, for you have still to add the unforgettable aroma of Chinese humanity, not conquered by the Florida water of their women, or the acrid fumes of the Pin-Head cigarette. Mingle all that with the strange dank odour of alluvial mud, flowing with the river water, and then know that you are entering the Yangtze at Gutzlaff. So ruminated O'Gorman of some Foreign Service or another who was in the s.s. "Kiangteen" from Ningpo. The Tartar-General of the Min-Che Provinces was on board. His one hundred and forty-seven packages of private effects, his bevy of female dependants, his well-gowned and hard-faced secretaries, and his haughty official servants were a sufficient announcement of his presence. In order to emphasise it still further, on the departure from Ningpo, the forts at Chinhai had lined up their garrisons on the Southern Bank and fired salutes with the due appearance of efficiency and briskness. But nobody looked upon that as a denial of the generally understood fact that these military evolutions were performed by chair-bearers and cargo-coolies hired for the ceremony. Thus while the conventionalities are observed with due decorum, the pay sheet may be made to prove a tolerably lucrative affair for the military official, and for the administration generally. The proper apportionment of decorum and lucre is the important duty of the official concerned. It was so at least in the year 19—, when O'Gorman was on his journey to Shanghai, and the other day he was heard to say that he thinks it will be so in 1913; there are fortunately some who hold that exterior changes interpreted as the regeneration of China are much overrated. In the course of his speculations in this vein O'Gorman sat on a bench staring across the bright gamboge water at the low shores of the estuary. Above the thumping of the old-fashioned engines two voices were raised in a falsetto-nasal wrangle. He began to follow the elusive tones with the alert ear of one who has well learnt their subtleties.

"Yes it is true, since you must know it," said the Falsetto, "she has given me her hair ornaments to pawn, and pawn them I will; you do not like it, but why did you tie her up and beat her?"

"Dog's body!" said the Nasal, "as the daughter of your mother, any man might know she would be a disreputable creature. Did I not with my own eyes perceive her smiling at the barber's apprentice. She came off cheap with a beating."

"Piece of dead flesh!" said the Falsetto, "if you were not a pockskin-face she would keep her smiles for you!" This allusion to the effect of small-pox upon his personal appearance evidently riled the the nasal voice beyond common expression. His reply touched upon the character of Falsetto's mother in terms which the foreigner would blush to use in a wilderness. There was a pause.

O'Gorman looked round, and saw by his side two men squatting on the deck against the engine-room wall. Pock-face was a paunchy obese person, an official servant, or runner as his hat and top-boots denoted. Falsetto was a lean countryfied fellow with a hare-lip, and the white shoes and white braided queue of one that is in mourning.

Pock-face leaned his chin upon his knees and pulled reflectively at the heavy mouthpiece of a long pipe. He deliberately tapped out the tiny brass bowl on Falsetto's white shoe. Then he broke the silence with the mock cordial manner called "laughing cold."

"After all, old younger brother, as a man, you are but truly and indeed a clownish thing; and *I* know how to deal with many matters; if you had seen me at your mattress this morning when you went up to take the air, you might know the hair ornaments which you obtained from her, in her vexation, are in my hands now and so to argue of pawning them is in truth of no use. For I missed them before I left the yamen, and knew for certain then that you must have them. And as they are now in their packet in this basket by my side, their pawning by you will be difficult; and widely on the contrary, for if any pawning is done it shall be

W. E. LEVESON, ESQ.

GONE HOME

by me. And I shall not invite you to see with me the singing girls in Foochow Road, as I might, otherwise."

This was a nasty surprise for Falsetto. A dark flush mounted under the tan of his lean features. He said nothing for a while. Then in a quieter tone he remarked that the beating of his sister had already wounded his feelings; but the theft of the hair ornaments from his mattress was in many respects unjust; yet Heaven knew his heart.

"It is in the middle of my chest," he went on, pointing to his stomach. Then, in the allusive tone which is the essence of Chinese repartee, he added, "But when a man is crooked it is in the armpit." As if to change the subject he continued, with a sidelong look, "However, as we are brothers, this talk between us is not good. As to your basket how much think you may your smuggled opium sell for?" He pointed with his thumb to a large well-filled basket of the kind which is commonly carried by two men slung on a stout bamboo carrying-pole. It was covered with blue linen, and the usual cord net.

"Oh," said Pock-face, with a perturbed flicker of his beady eyes, "So you have guessed that. No matter. Never will be foreign Examiner-devil dare to interfere with the official baggage of His Excellency the Tartar-General. So your foolish talk cannot trouble me, and one who would escape duty on opium is not so heavily punished as he who smuggles salt."

"Who talks of salt?" the other hastily interposed.

"If it be not I that talk of salt who is it?" said Pock-face, "and in order that you may not be too rich, you shall share with me the proceeds of the coffin with corpse which you have in the hold."

"It is my nephew's body," declared Falsetto with evident trepidation, "you know well how he died of summer sickness just before he was to leave my house. Can a man not take back to the family grave a relative who passes on a sudden from the world, without incurring evil talk?"

"Ai-Ya, but these many words are in vain and how can they be believed? The woman your sister whom I have for a wife, bade farewell to your nephew on the day appointed for continuing his journey by junk for Wenchow, the while I lay upon my opium couch. Even had I been deaf, who that knows you as I know, would believe that there is anything but salt in the coffin, and no corpse at all?"

O'Gorman was by this time deeply interested in these typical ramifications but for a while he could hear no more of the argument. The two became instinctively suspicious of his listening attitude, and continued their dialogue in low monotones.

Presently the countryman cried out with an air of defeat that it was well, his brother-in-law was a hard hand; it were better that he should have half the proceeds of the salt than that he should report and cause the foreign Examiner-devil to take all; he was safe, to be sure, in his confidence about his own little opium matter; but it was indeed a true proof that honest men should become yamen runners, if they would be immune from Customs' search and all the other hard circumstances which make common folk pass a bitter life.

By this time the "Kiangteen" was far past Woosung within sight of the factory chimneys, and was slowly threading through the yellow fairway to the China Merchants' Wharf in the French Settlement. The Customs officer came aboard in due course, and sauntered by the piles of the Tartar General's baggage and that of his suite, with an air of unconcern; taking good care to leave it undisturbed as a wise and experienced foreign Examiner-devil should. The countryman shifted away from Pock-face to the other side of the

gangway, and watched with a curious look. Then when the Examiner had almost passed by, he plucked his sleeve, and said:

"Hey, hey, *yapien*," and pointed to the bulging basket.

The foreign devil heard the word of opium, and turned, eager at the thought of a profitable seizure report. Then he saw the official hat on the head of Pock-face, and hesitated. Pock-face was white to the lips. Cupidity prevailed! the Examiner-devil's hand was on the netting of the basket. Pock-face jabbered swiftly of a coffin with salt in the hold. The Examiner-devil would not bother to listen. He tugged at the blue covering. O'Gorman then heard a quick falsetto scream with a note of surprise in it. Dead eyes stared up from a woman's face in the basket. Round her neck a fibre cord was tightly tied, and the lower part of her body was doubled under her; on the top was a small paper-wrapped packet. The countryman fell upon the corpse yelling the name of his sister. When he was dragged off, O'Gorman says that the packet was no longer there.

. . . . . .

As Falsetto walked behind the gabbling mob to the French Police Station he was heard to say that the heart of Pock-face had indeed proved to be in his armpit;—"But mine," said he, pointing to his stomach, "is in the middle."

So Falsetto pawned the hair ornaments after all.

FOUND IN A GUEST-BOOK

Ery orry o o
Sense there's not a————
Find the missing word, and lo!
You'll restore my prestige;
Deftly knock my eye out,
And destroy my ease,
Then the remnant bind about
Ery orry o o, please!

CORRESPONDENCE

The following communication has found its way into our columns owing to some error on the part of our correspondent, who, we believe, really intended it for *Quack's* excellent contemporary the *North China Daily News*. But almost anything which is Quack, is good enough for *Quack*. It is to be noted that owing to some carelessness on the part of our correspondent's typist the word *pigeons* originally appeared in the title of the letter but we put that right.

HOMING TABBIES.

To the Editor

"SIR,—Some time ago I wrote an article in your widely-"circulated paper in the hope of getting a club formed so that "races could be organized with "tabby-cats" but I have been "unsuccessful in getting the assistance of anyone who under-"stands the rules, etc., in connexion with the forming "of a 'homing tabby' Club. I understand quite a "number of residents here have these 'tabbies' and "if we could get these together I am certain we could "form a club and organize long distance racing. In "England this form of sport is gone in for on a great scale, "and some fine performances have been done by these racing "tabbies in races covering 700 and 800 miles. I sincerely "hope that everyone owning these 'tabbies' will join in the "formation of a club.

I am, etc.,
"TABBY"

Shanghai, December 13.

North China Daily News, November 29, 1912.

QUEEN VICTORIA'S DIARY.

"A work of great historical and human interest—a two-"volume selection from the diaries kept by Queen Victoria "before her marriage—was to be published by Mr. John "Murray on November 7.

"These volumes, edited by Lord Esher and prepared with "the active co-operation of Queen Mary, afford an intimate "revelation of Queen Victoria's interests and activities, and "present a vivid study of the constraint of childhood "gradually disappearing before a *growling* sense of "responsibility."

De mortuis nil nisi bonum!

North China Daily News, December 9, 1912.

MARRIAGE.

"CREASY-SHELDON.—On November 6, 1912, at H.B.M's "Consulate-General, Shanghai, by H. Phillips, Esq., Acting "Consul-General, and afterwards at Holy Trinity Cathedral."

How dark they keep these things nowadays!

OPIUM

On through the grey mists I rose; grey, swirling vapours that now brought close to me shapeless forms and the cold faces of the forgotten dead, and anon clasped then to their bosom so that they sped silently from my sight. Ever I ascended through days that were no days, and through nights that were as days. There was no sound, and time was not. And then stole in upon the sensitiveness of my mind a knowledge that my journey's end was near; the greyness grew more thin and I came suddenly into a clear and open place of limitless dimensions with a floor of azure and ceiling of azure; and there shone a great light so that I could not see. So because of the brightness of the light I lay prone, and after interminable years a still voice as from infinite distance spake these words:—"MY MESSENGER WAITETH FOR THEE," and so I lifted mine eyes, and lo, the brilliance had vanished. Then again I lowered mine eyes and knelt, for before me stood an angel of unsurpassable loveliness, with hair of new gold and clad in a flowing garment. And the colour of the garment was sometimes purple and anon it was as the ruddiness of hot iron and anon as delicate as the blush of a maiden. And as again I looked it seemed as the grass of the earth. And as still I knelt the angel spake, and her voice was as crystal water rippling over precious stones; and these words I heard—"I am the Light o' the North—I am come as Messenger to show thee the glories of the Heavens, Arise"— So I arose and clasped the hand of the Angel but for very fear dare not look again to her face. And as we journeyed we passed through the Chamber of the Clouds, high as the limit of vision and with the walls broken in deep rifts, and full of dark shadow—to the Chamber there was no floor, and we journeyed as in air. And anon opened up below us great caverns of endless depth and as we passed by came we to one in aspect more terrifying than those preceeding. And from out the hideous night that filled the depth came vile and horrible sounds. And as we approached nearer, the noises became more terrifying in their intensity so that I sank down and hid my face in the garment of the angel. But Light o' the North held my hand, and bade me to look into the Cave of the Thunders. And as I looked down into the pit a flash of vivid blue lit up the whole Heavens, and in the flash I saw as in a picture, a ship such as fisher folk use, and the vessel was fast on a dark and evil rock, sore beaten by monstrous waves so that the sailors took refuge among the rigging. And it was dark. But again, before I had time to draw breath, the Heavens were filled with a second flash, and I looked and saw again the horrid rock and the swirling sea, but the ship saw I not. And again it was dark, and I shuddered and grew sick at heart, and ever we journeyed on and I perceived the beauties of the Eastern sky, and the Southern sky. And Light o' the North sighed and said, "To see "the Northern Sky is the end." On this I pondered and yet still I desired to see the Northern sky. And Light o' the North said—"Come then mortal"—and we sped on, faster and yet faster we sped so that the breath choked in my throat, and I cried aloud to the Angel to stay. But Light o' the North answered me—"We cannot stay for we "are on the wings of Boreas"—Then I beheld a light no bigger than the point of a needle, which, as we journeyed, grew in greatness and power. And when I again dared to look I saw that the light was a star of thousands of leagues in girth. But though it was of a brilliance untellable no heat came from it and I touched it, and it was as ice, and here we paused, and the Angel spake—"This is the star of "the North, and yonder is Alioth"—and I knew the Angel spake of the two heavenly bodies which give direction to the seekers after Truth in a blind world, so I marvelled a while, and turned to the Angel, but Light o' the North was transfigured and suddenly she flickered across the Northern sky and was gone. I cried to her, but she heard not—I besought her with tears to return, but in vain. Then, overcome by awe unutterable, I sank my head in my hands, a million years passed and I raised my head. It was dark.

. . . . . .

And slowly I discerned a light shining through my window and I knew it was Star of the North that I hand but lately touched, and with aching, dull head, I turned upon my side, and waited for the dreary dawn.

Shanghai Stock Exchange

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AFTER THE CHRISTMAS HUNT

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My Dear chap. If you want to win a hunt you must do as I do.

a V. O. S. Whisky and Aquarius before you start

That's what made me romp home a winner to-day !—Now let's have the other half—Here's luck !